Understanding what citizens want

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Two parts…

- What do people want from public services and engagement?
- Evidence on what will impact on feelings of influence

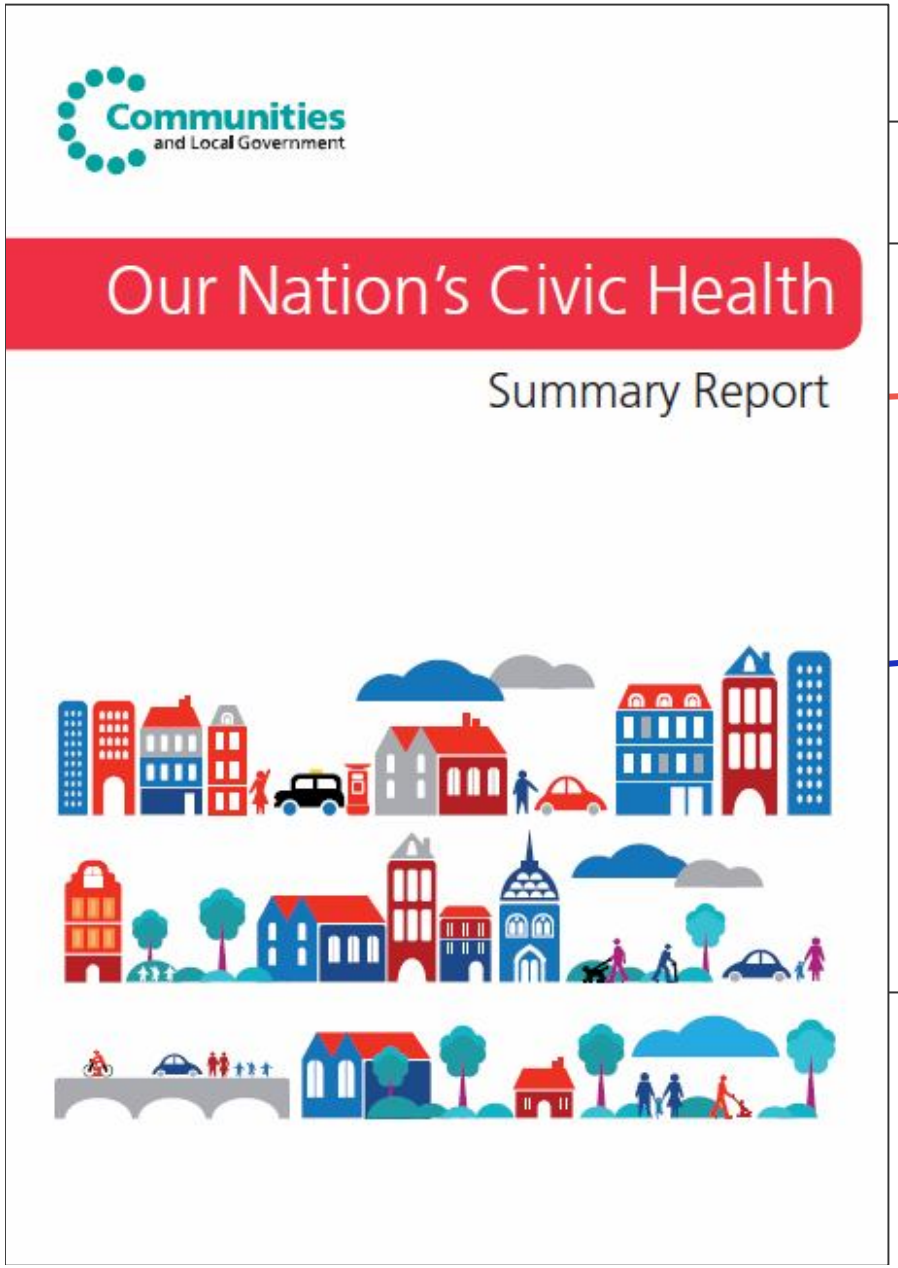
We've strived to give people what they want…

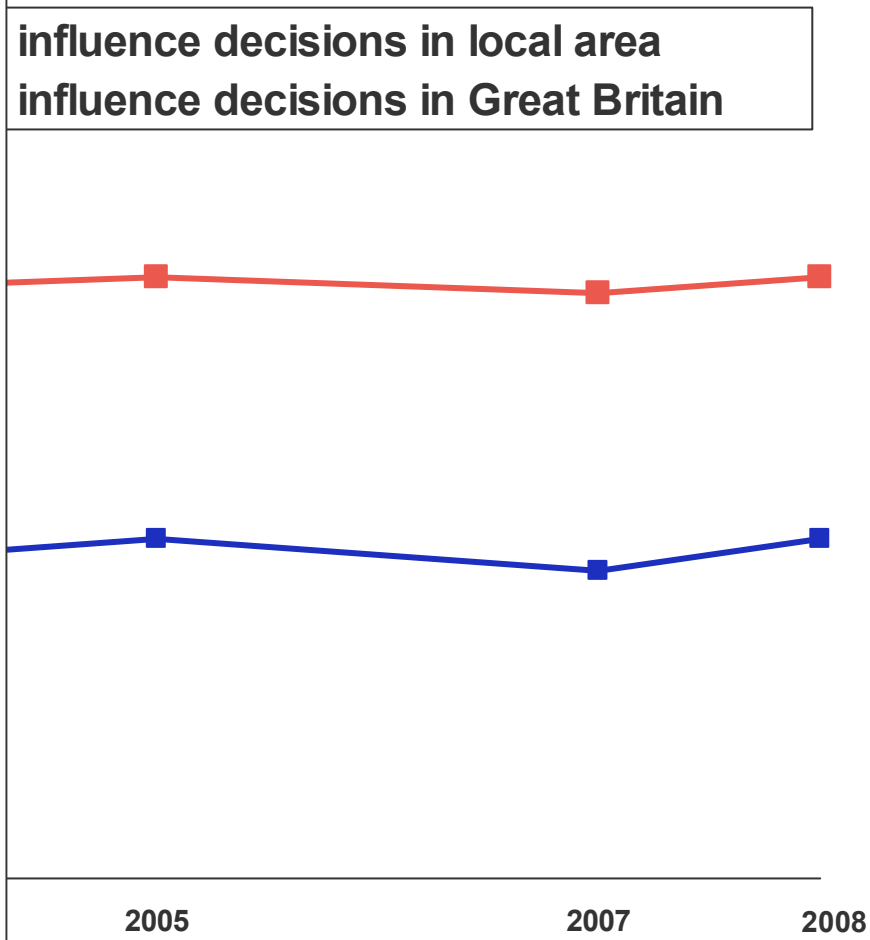
"We are proposing to put an entirely different dynamic in place to drive our public services: one where the service will be driven not by the managers but by the user – the patient, the parent, the pupil and law-abiding citizen."

The Rt. Hon. Tony Blair MP
Prime Minister, 7 years ago

Years of reform to boost involvement and accountability, surveys, juries, local area forums, more elected reps, NM, NDC etc etc…

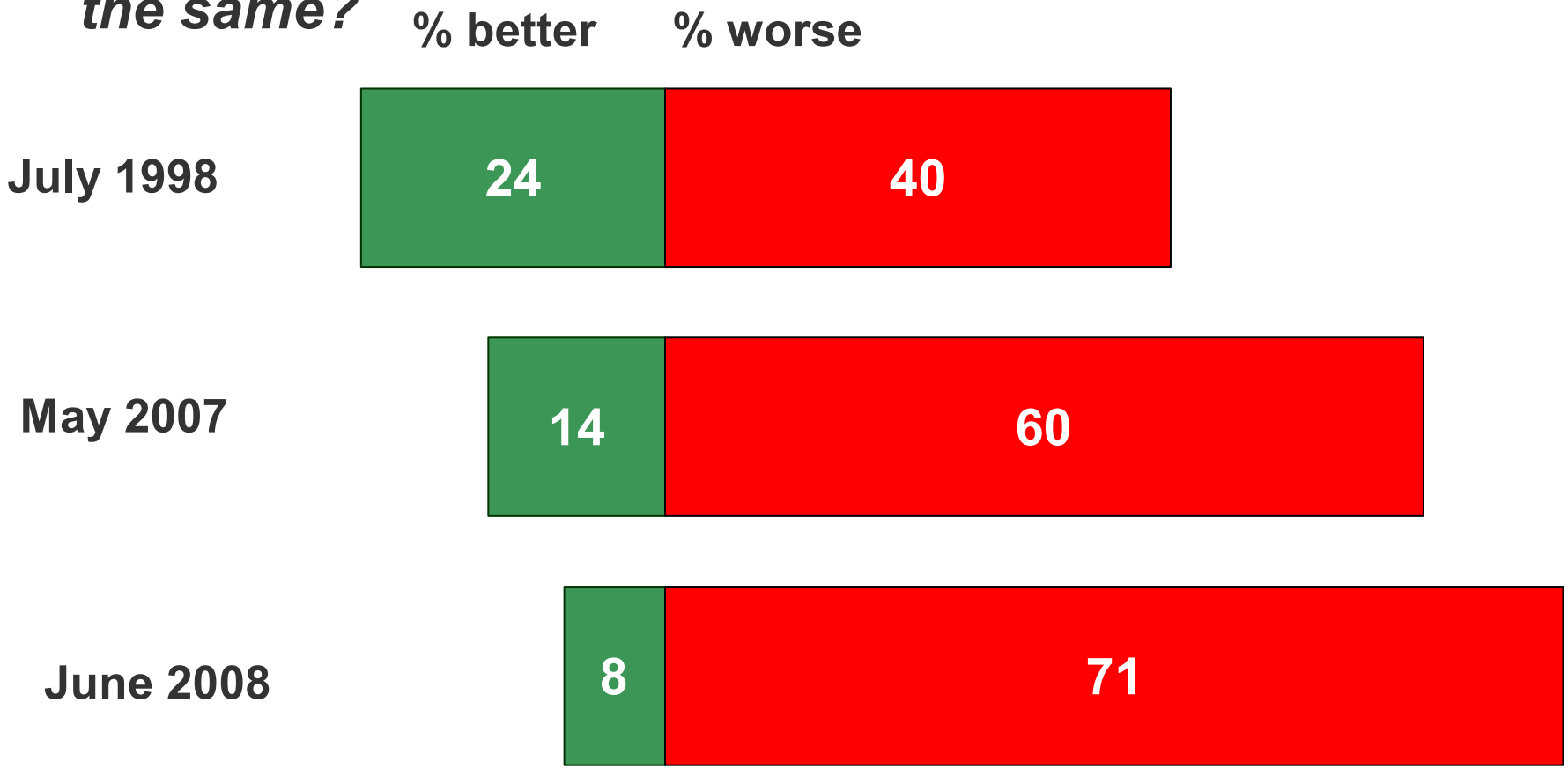
And slight decline in proportion who feel they can influence decision-making…





Not so bad compared with other trends…

Q Generally speaking do you think that Britain as a place to live is getting better or worse or is it staying the same?



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Base: 2,019 British adults, 9 May-5 June 2008

So what do people want?

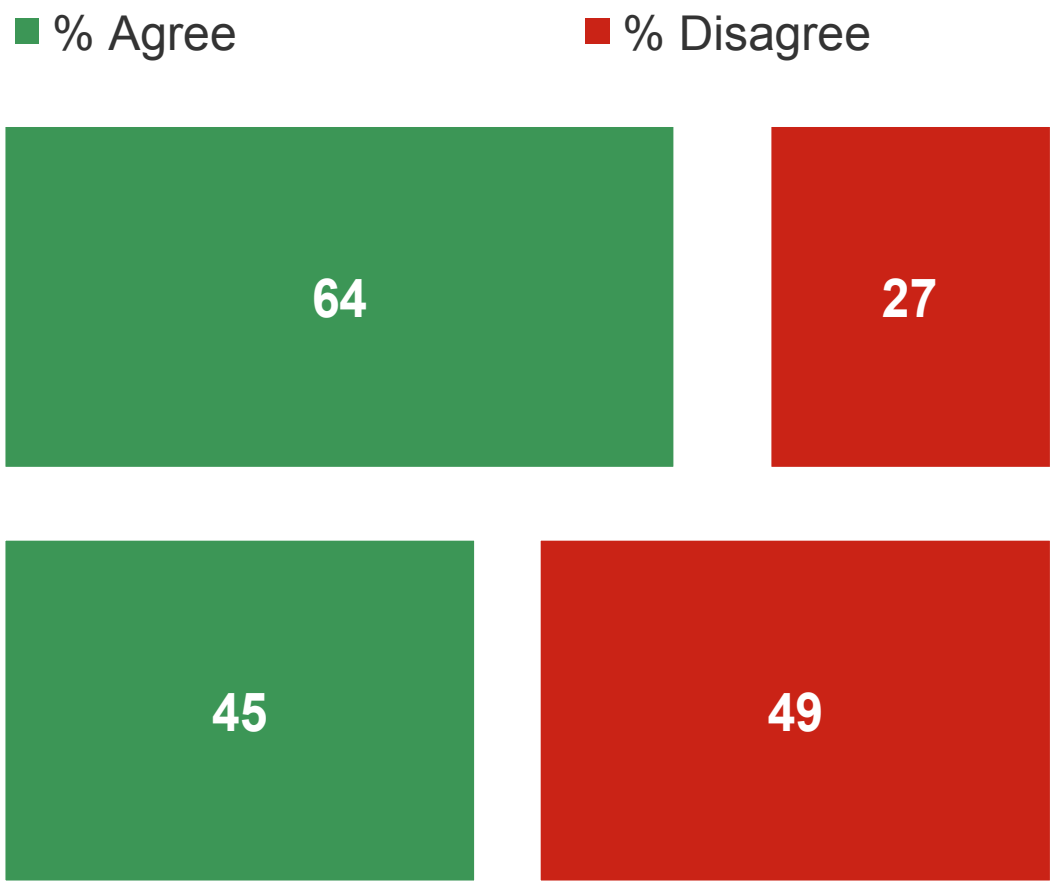
“Swedish services for US taxes…”

"We now expect more of government than we do of God"

52% of the public agree....

We believe we can still have our cake and eat it…

To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about public services in Britain?



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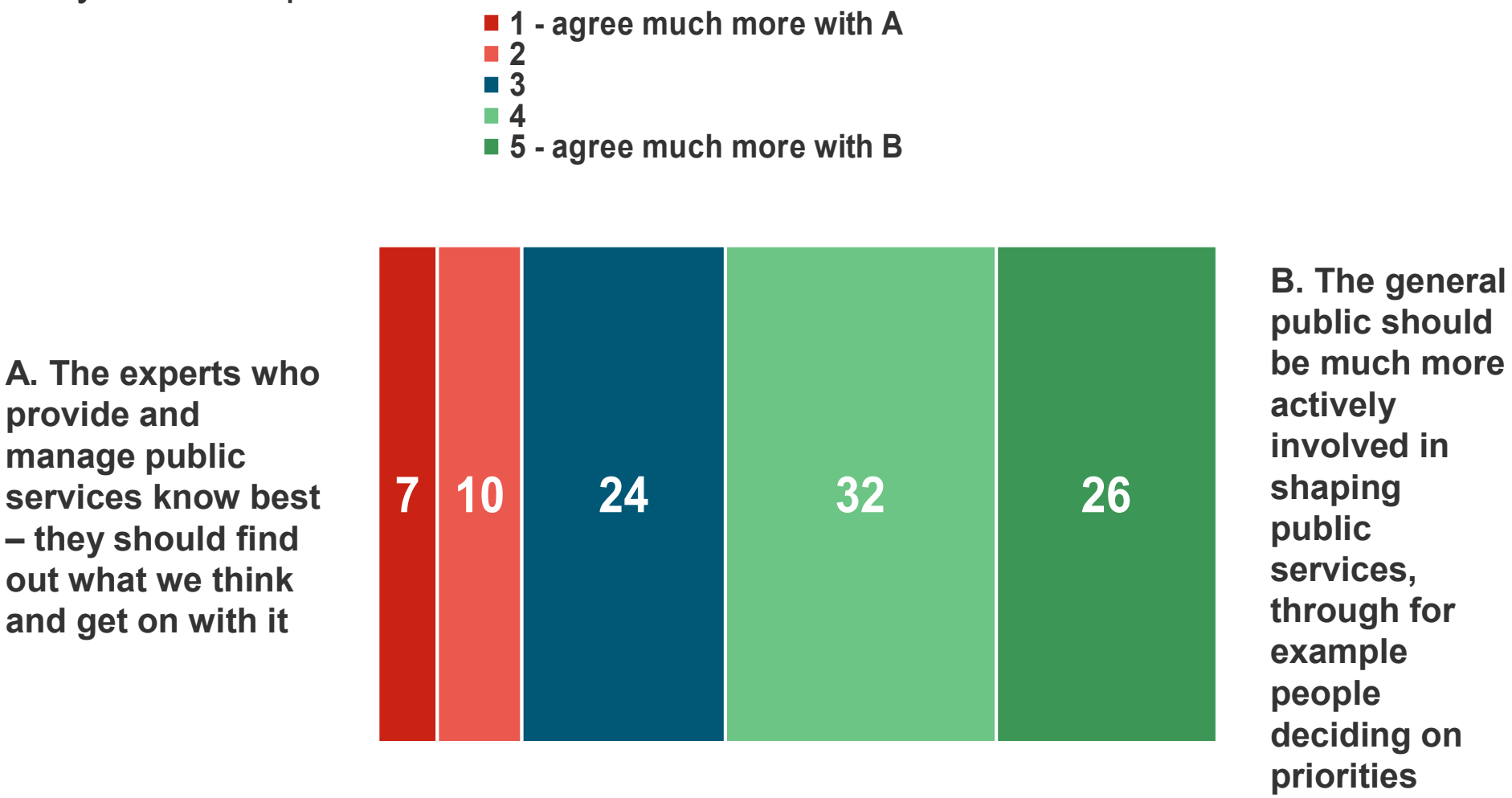
Base: 1500 adults, March 2010

Huge challenges to get more for less…

Will empowerment and local control help?

In favour of more public control...

Please read each pair of statements and decide which comes closest to your own opinion



Base: 2,019 British adults, fieldwork dates 9th May – 17th June

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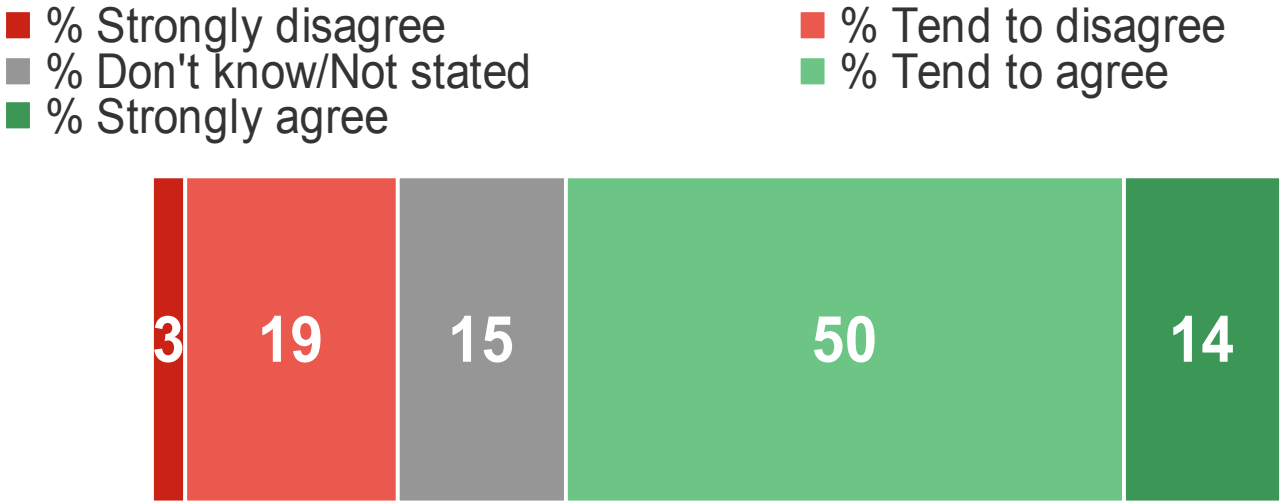
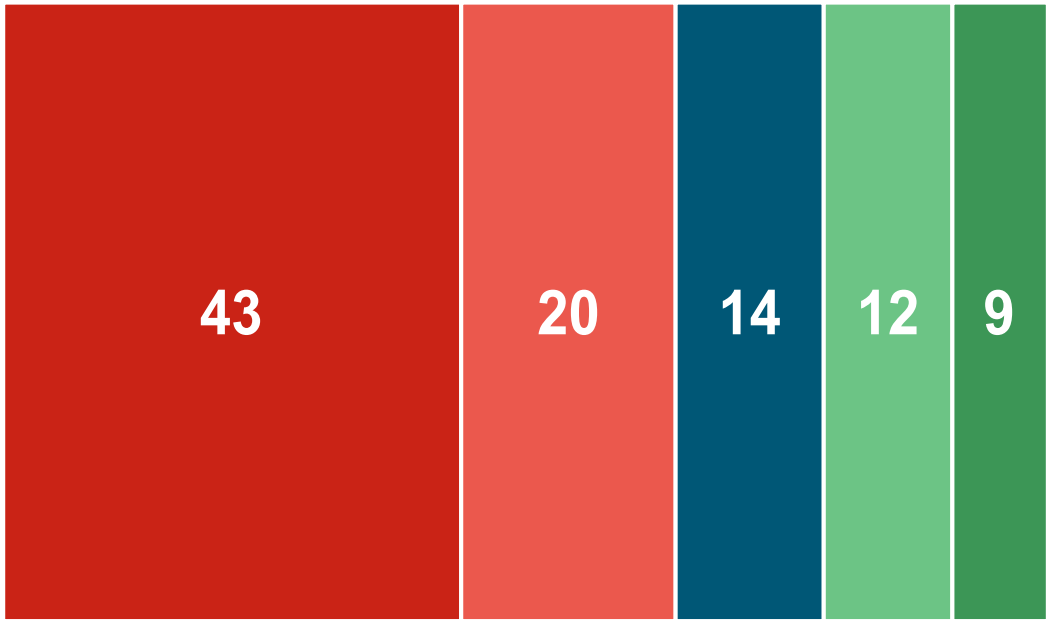
...and local control...

If neighbourhoods take more responsibility for addressing crime and anti-social behaviour (such as through reporting crime or monitoring community CCTV), they should be given more control over police resources



...but want services to be the same everywhere

Please read each pair of statements and decide which comes closest to your own opinion



A. Standards of public services should be the same everywhere in Britain

B. The people who live in different parts of Britain should be able to decide for themselves what standard of public services should be provided in their area

Base: 2,019 British adults, fieldwork dates 9th May – 17th June

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The "postcode lottery" is a national fixation

88 items

96 items

GuardianUnlimited

136 items

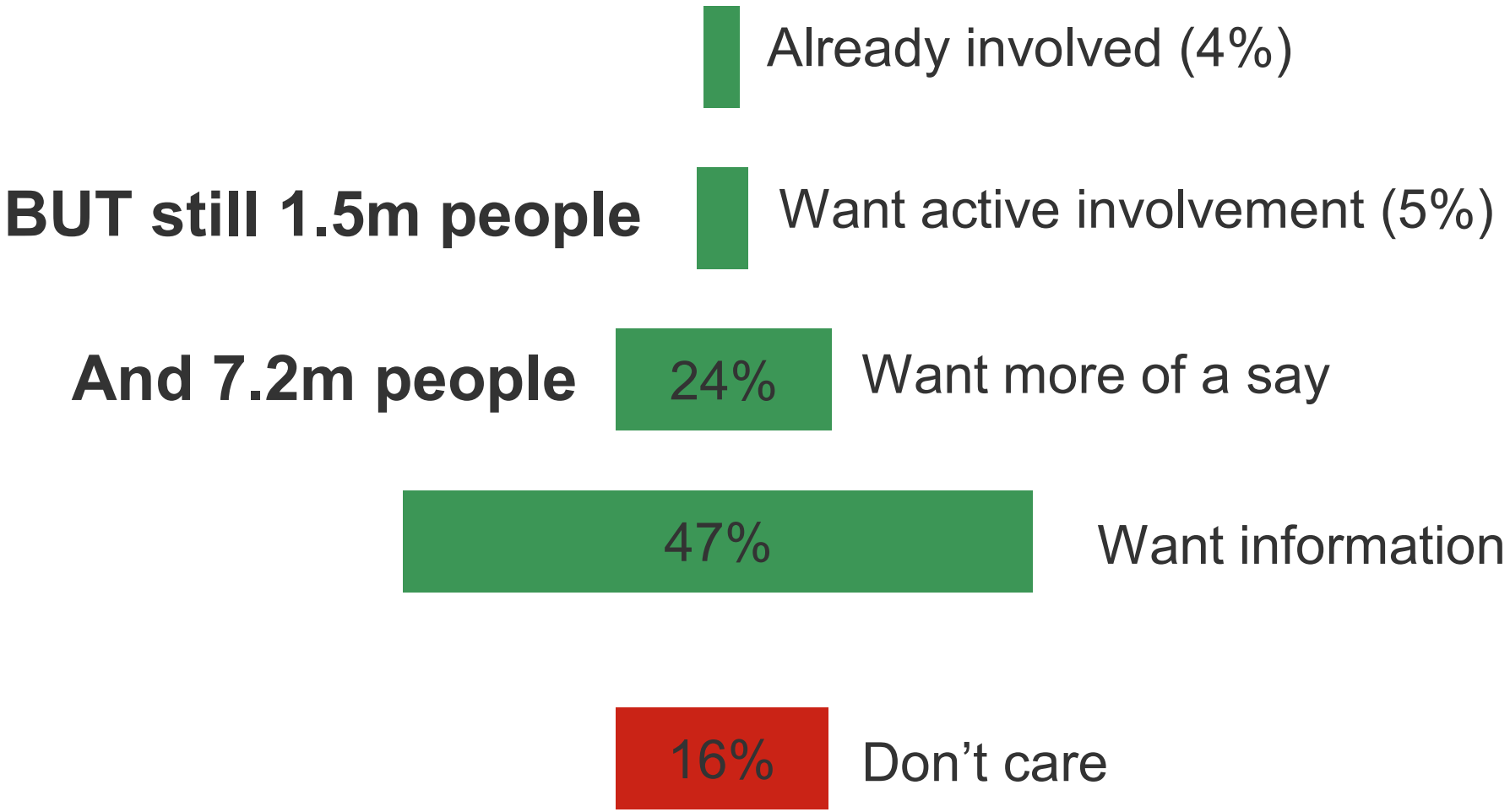
"about 660"

Driven by real concerns about fairness

NOT a reason to stop local control

There is no ladder of involvement…

Q Levels of involvement/interest in involvement in local services



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Base: 1,896 GB adults, 18+. Sept 2008. Source: Ipsos MORI

1. Feelings of influence are to a large degree set by the nature of local populations

We can predict influence fairly accurately…

Use analysis techniques on Place Survey data to identify characteristics that are beyond your control that are most associated with feelings of influence…

We can explain 63% of variation in feelings of influence knowing only 4 things about area…

Ethnic diversity (positive)
Level of net international immigration (positive)
Region (North East higher)
Urbanity (negative)

Important to "level the playing field" – but IS variation, areas outperforming what we'd expect

2. Communication and consultation are key to affecting feelings of influence...
...although getting what you want is key too

Communications and consultation

Top factors related to influence from analysis…
– information provision and
– sense of being consulted/listened to

People *SAY* they don't mind if told can't get what they want as long as explained – closing the feedback loop

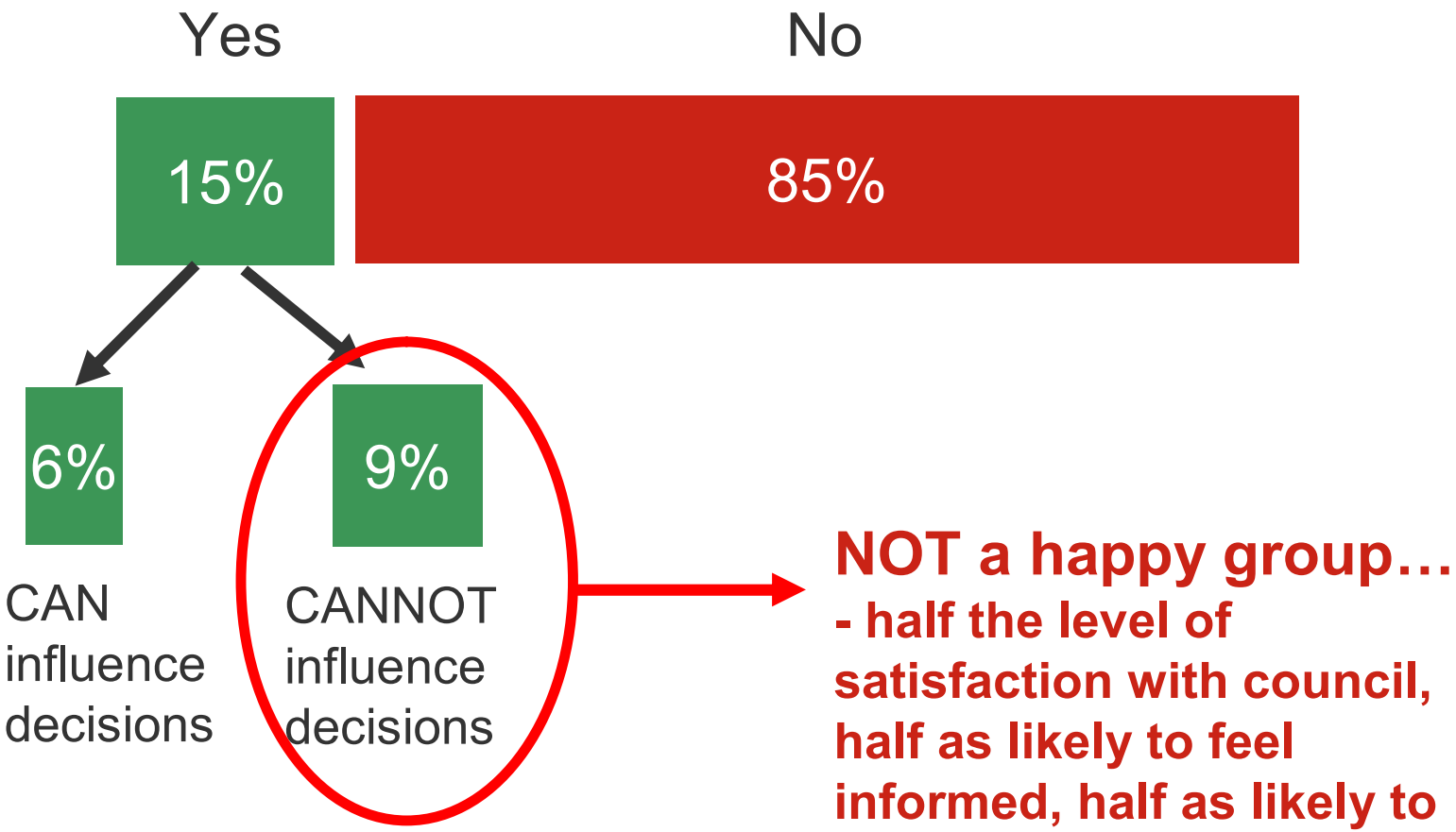
Most powerful impact on feelings of influence…
= egs where got things done/stopped – or failed to

Re-opening of same local road…
= triumph of local influence AND
= evidence that councils don't listen to residents

3. Active involvement not the whole answer…

There are lots of unhappy involved people…

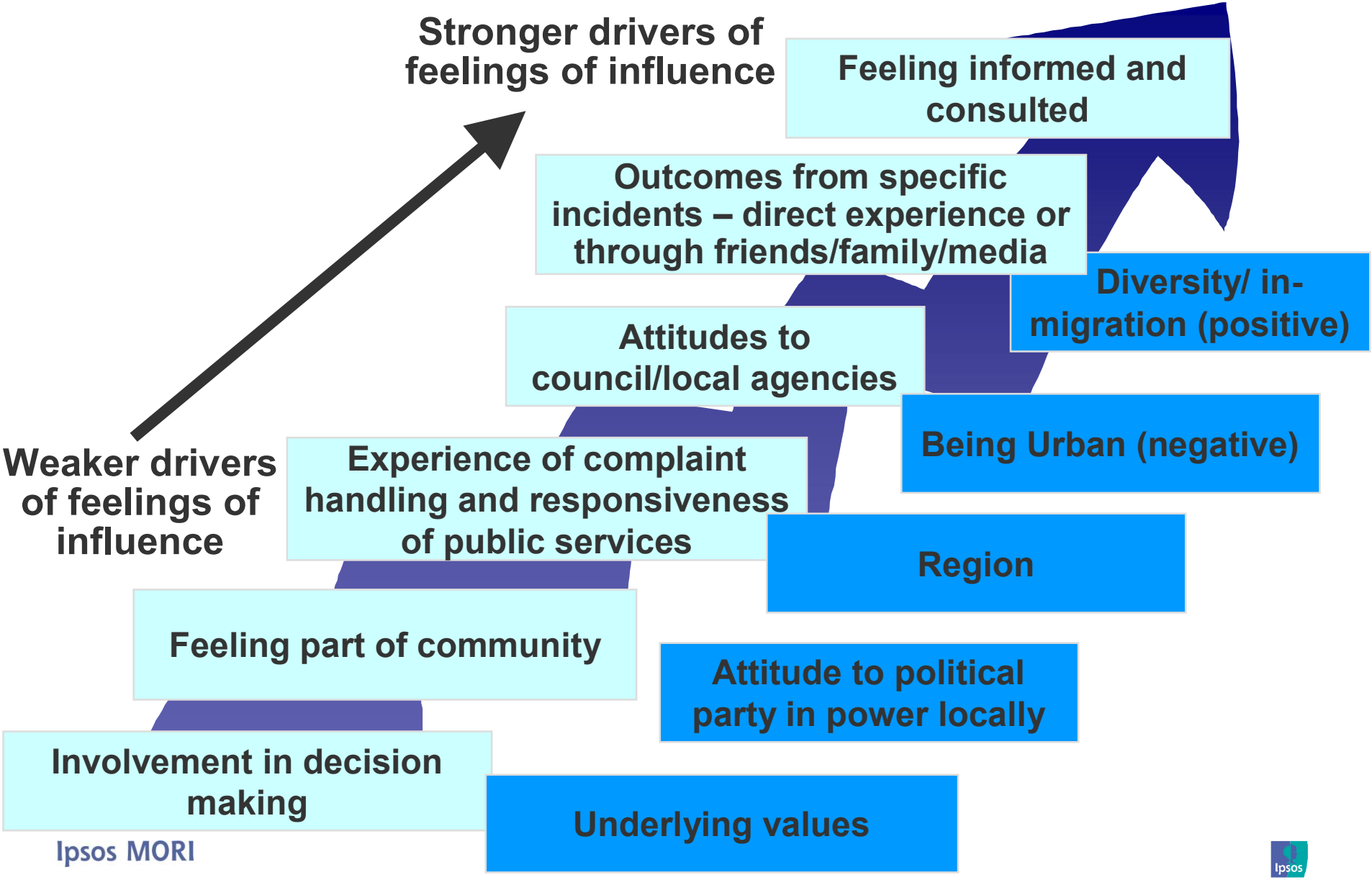
Involved in decision-making bodies on local issues



NOT a happy group…
- half the level of satisfaction with council, half as likely to feel informed, half as likely to think views sought…

The start of a model of influence...

Key factors associated with feelings of influence among local residents



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Thank you for listening

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